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ABSTRACT

This four-week fourth grade social studies unit dealing with religious dimensions in ancient Egyptian culture was developed by the Public Education Religion Studies Center at Wright State University. It seeks to help students understand ancient Egypt by looking at the people, the culture, and the people's world view. The unit begins with outlines of concepts and generalizations, vocabulary, and subject matter to be covered. Five cognitive, six affective, and three psychomotor objectives are stated. The first lesson in the unit is on Egyptian beliefs that harmonious living with nature and with their gods ensured a happy existence both before and after death. The belief that death is the passing from this world to the next is the focus of lesson two. Lessons three and four discuss Egyptian sacred ceremonies and sacred writings. Each lesson has initiatory, developmental, extended, and culminating activities, and suggestions for evaluation. It is assumed that students have had some exposure to the continent of Africa before they begin the unit. The instructional resources listed are books for teachers and for students, magazines, encyclopedias, filmstrips, movies, media resources, museums, and teaching packets. (Author/DC)

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ANCIENT EGYPT

prepared for
Fourth Grade Social Studies

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ANCIENT EGYPT

INTRODUCTION

The treasures of King Tutankhamun have excited the curiosity of many Americans. Newspapers, magazines, books, television, and even fashions are featuring the King Tut theme. This is an opportune time for the educator to teach about Ancient Egypt.

Ancient Egypt can be understood by looking at the people, the culture, and their view of the world. Clifford Geertz provides a conceptual basis for educators to understand the relationship between culture and religion. This paper will deal with the religious dimension present in the ancient Egyptian culture.

The material prepared by the Florida State University in connection with its Religion-Social Studies Curriculum Program is extremely useful to the elementary classroom teacher. It provides a structure for bringing conceptual ideas to the level of the student. The Florida State Materials (LAR/SS) prove that difficult ideas can be dealt with effectively in the elementary grades.

This unit will be directed towards fourth grade social studies students who have had some exposure to the continent of Africa. Adaptations in the content of this unit may be made according to the interest and maturity of the students. Four lessons will be developed with extended activities provided to allow for individual differences. This unit could be taught in connection with a unit on Africa and comparisons and contrasts could be drawn. Three to four weeks should be allowed for this unit.

CONCEPTS AND

GENERALIZATIONS

1. Religion reveals basic concepts the people have about life and the world.

2. Religion can motivate human beings to make optimal use of their talents in multiple aspects of their lives. For example, in communal structures and art forms and work, religious motivations are found.

3. Religion reveals itself in the symbols, art, architecture, government, writings, laws, and customs of a culture.

4. Religion provides sanctions for behavior.

Concepts

Story

Community

Celebration

Tradition

Immortality

Judgment

Sacred Time

Sacred Space

Sacred People

Sacred Writings

Sacred Objects

Vocabulary

ancient

pyramids

hieroglyphics

judgment

myth

mummies

ceremony

immortality

CONTENT OUTLINE

I. The Egyptians believed in living in harmony with nature and with their gods to ensure a happy existence in this life and in the next.

   A. The god of the Nile was offered gifts so that the Nile river would flood and make the land fertile.
   B. The god of the sun was said to sail across the heavenly river in the sky in the daytime and fight the underworld at night. Temples were built to offer sacrifices to the sun god.

II. Egyptians believed that death was just a passing between this world and the next. Special tombs were made and bodies preserved because of the belief in immortality.

   A. Pharaohs built pyramids and tombs.
   B. Bodies were mummified after death.
   C. Temples were built near burial grounds to offer sacrifices to the gods.
   D. Obelisks were built.
   E. Sphinx were built to protect the tombs.

III. The Egyptians had sacred ceremonies.

   A. The temple, which served as a dwelling place of the gods, had daily services.
   B. When the pyramid was completed, an elaborate ceremony took place.
   C. Sacred ceremonies were held at harvest time and in honor of a god.

IV. The Egyptians had sacred writings.

   A. The word hieroglyphics means sacred writings.
   B. The Books of the Dead gave us the Egyptian concept of Judgment.

OBJECTIVES

Cognitive

1. The student will demonstrate his ability to locate Africa, Egypt, and the Nile river on a map.
2. The student will state one reason why the Egyptians created myths.
3. The student will state one reason why the Egyptians went through elaborate preparations for death and burial.
4. The student will demonstrate his understanding of an Egyptian ceremony by use of an art medium or role playing.
5. The student will demonstrate his understanding of hieroglyphics by writing 2 hieroglyphics and explaining the meaning of the symbols.

Affective

1. The student will have an appreciation of an ancient civilization in Africa.
2. The student will feel empathy with the people of Egypt.
3. The student will increase his self-esteem.
4. The student will appreciate the work of others in the classroom.
5. The student will demonstrate cooperation with others in completing tasks assigned to his group.
6. The student will enjoy the study of this unit.

Psychomotor

1. The student will demonstrate the use of fine motor skills by constructing a model.
2. The student will improve his gross motor skills by participating in an Egyptian dance or role playing a given situation.
3. The student will demonstrate his visual perception by discovering Egyptian symbols present in a picture.

SUGGESTED LESSONS

Lesson 1: Myths tell us what the people thought of their gods and how they explained natural phenomena.

Preparation (Optional): Order copies of A Coloring Book of Ancient Egypt from Bellerophon Books. This will give the students an opportunity to get acquainted with the gods and life style of Ancient Egypt before beginning this unit.

Materials: Grain, map, and bulletin board.

Pre-assessment: List the word EGYPT in gold on a felt or bulletin board. Have the children write the word on their own paper. Give the children five minutes to draw or write down anything they know about the word. A class discussion should follow letting students share their knowledge. Individuals or the teacher can make appropriate symbols for the ideas shared in the discussion. Symbols should be put on the bulletin board and referred to during the unit. Papers could be given points for the knowledge given on Egypt and compared to a post-test of the same type given at the conclusion of this unit.

Initiatory Activities:* Locate the continent Africa, country Egypt, and river Nile on a map. Why is water important for the people? Why is the sun important for the people? What do many of the people do for a living?

Many people in Ancient Egypt were involved with growing things. Pass around a sample of grain. Why was grain important to the people? What is needed to make grain grow?

Since the Egyptians lived very close to nature, they believed that special gods ruled nature. Two important gods were the god of the Nile river and the Sun god. Why were these important?

The Egyptians had a special ceremony to honor the god of the Nile at the time it was supposed to flood. If the Nile river did not flood, the land would not be fertile to grow crops.

The Pharaoh was in charge of making sure the land would be fertile and the people prosperous. At the time when the river was to flood, the Pharaoh went to the river and offered special sacrifices. He could communicate with the gods since he was considered to be a god-king. If the gods of the Nile were pleased, the river would flood. Why does this make the land fertile?

Developmental Activities: The Egyptians also had a story for why the sun rises and sets in the sky.

*Discussion, questions, and background information will be included with activities.

Myth of RA (RE)*

A heavenly river flows east to west in the sky. Every morning the sun god gets into his boat and sails the heavenly river. His boat is called "millions of years." As Ra sails across the sky, he brings light and heat to the earth below. The river ends in a mountain in the west. Ra reaches this mountain every afternoon.

Every evening Ra goes into the Underworld. All night long Ra fights against the Powers of Darkness. Every night he wins. In the morning, he comes up at the eastern end of the heavenly river. He is ready to begin another day's trip along the heavenly river in the sky.

Evaluation: The students should answer the following questions individually and share their answers with classmates in a small group. A spokesman may report to the class.

1. According to this story, why does the sun move?
2. Why did the Egyptians tell this story?

Extended Activities: In Dayton, take the class to the Museum of Natural History. The Museum has a display of Egyptian gods, a mummy, a funerary boat, canopic jars, and a small replica of the tomb of King Tutankhamun. A speaker at the museum will give a talk on archeology if prearranged. The teacher can also arrange through the museum to take the class to the site of a local dig to see how archeologists are learning about ancient Indians in this area. Students may enroll in summer class and work at the dig. In other areas contact your local museums to see what resources are available on Egyptology.

The Dayton Art Institute also has a display of items from Ancient Egypt. (The works are found in the room with other ancient artifacts.) Have the children take note of how the colors on the relief have stayed for thousands of years. Help the children to discover that the hot, dry climate helped to preserve these items. Also the absence of storms, earthquakes, and volcanoes left many delicate items intact.

Have the children collect tools that the archeologists would use to uncover these artifacts. Tools could include picks, screens, brooms, etc. Give the demonstration of how the archeologist would work at the dig in front of the class. Be prepared to answer questions.

Write a report about one of the Egyptian gods. Amon-Re, Osiris, Isis, or Horus are some suggestions. You may draw a picture or make a statue if you prefer.

Write your own myth and illustrate it. What does your myth tell us about life?

*Bostick, N. and others. The Human Adventure: Four World Views. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971. p. 72.

Find an example of another group of people that believes in many gods. Tells us about one of their gods or myths.

The word polytheism means many gods. Find examples of other words with the prefix poly. Are there any other prefixes or suffixes that would be interesting to learn about?

Take some seed and grow grain. Record all your information about materials needed, conditions, and results. Why do you think you got the results you did?

Use a shallow pan and clay or dirt. Construct an irrigation ditch. Why did the early Egyptians have to irrigate? Be prepared to tell the class.

Lesson 2: Egyptians made preparations for life after death.

Initiatory Activities: Show movie "Ancient Egypt" which can be rented from Time-Life. The movie was developed for older children, but fourth graders can see the land of Egypt, the ancient temples, tombs of Pharaohs, and artifacts. The children should review the preparations for life after death that they saw in the movie.

Developmental Activities: In order that students gain some understanding of the time span involved, have the students gather 30 sheets of paper. Each sheet represents one hundred years. Divide the last sheet into 10 sections and color in only the last of these ten sections. Have the children stand around the room each holding a sheet of paper. Tell the children they are as old as the colored section on the last paper but it was as long as all the paper around the room since the pyramids were built. Continue to discuss this idea with the children and let them make observations.

Divide the class into small groups and give each group a box of sugar cubes. Tell the children to be builders in their group and make a temple, tomb, or Pyramid. They may use glue to secure the cubes even though the Egyptians did not.

Let the children share the results with the class and tell any problems they had building. Ask them to speculate as to why the Egyptians went to all this trouble to build these structures.

Discuss the Egyptian belief in immortality. Stress the fact that they enjoyed living so much they could not see it stopping at death. They drew pictures inside their tombs of what the afterlife was to be. It was to be like Egypt at its best.

Discuss items the Egyptians might need for their trip to the next world. Show the slides from the TREASURES OF KING TUT.

Evaluation: Ask the children what items were placed in the tomb of King Tut. Why were any of these items important?

Why did the Pharaohs build tombs? Why did we see mummies in the movie on Ancient Egypt? What can we learn about the Ancient Egyptians?

Extended Activities: Make a model of the temple at Thebes, an Obelisk, Sphinx, pyramid, or tomb. Try to find out why these were sacred or holy for the Egyptians. Why are we interested in them today?

Make an artifact found in a tomb to make the passage easier to the next world. This could be a model shown on the slides on King Tut or a funerary boat that was to help them sail on the heavenly river.

Find examples of the special blessings written on the tombs. There were also magic spells. Why were these written?

Do a report on Queen Hatshepsut. She ruled Egypt very successfully. A beautiful temple was made in her honor.

Construct a model of the temple of Queen Hatshepsut. Can you find out if it is still standing today?

Be a detective and try and figure out the rest of the conversation between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Carter when they found the tomb of King Tut. Lord Carnarvon: "Can you see anything?" Mr. Carter: "Yes, wonderful things!" Finish this conversation. Find a friend and act it out for the class.

Write a report about what we can learn about the Egyptians from their tombs, buildings, temples, and pyramids.

Lesson 3: The Egyptians had sacred ceremonies.

Initiatory Activities: Bring in pictures of sacred or holy ceremonies the child might be familiar with. For example, Baptism, Burial, Easter, Christmas, Passover, or a wedding would be an appropriate ceremony. Ask the children why these ceremonies would be sacred?

Developmental Activities: Tell the children that the Egyptians also had sacred ceremonies. Can anyone remember one? The blessing of the Nile river occurred at a special time of the year when the stars were in the right position. Would anyone guess at any other ceremonies they might have?

The Egyptians had a special ceremony at harvest time to thank the gods. The Pharaoh would cut a sheaf of grain to make the harvest sacred. Do we have any special celebration to give thanks for our harvest?

The god of the temple had a special ceremony in the morning. The priests, acting in place of the Pharaoh, would awaken the god and make offerings of food to him. In the evening and at noontime prayers and hymns were offered.

Show the picture from National Geographic, May, 1966 p. 703. It shows a ceremony to dedicate a monument to Ramses. The Pharaoh carries the sacred symbols of the crook and the staff while the queen walks beside him holding sacred symbols of the goddess Hathor.

Trumpets and drums sound as this living god leads the march. The temple priests follow carrying an image of gods covered with cloth. (The people were not allowed to even look upon the image of the god.) Show the students the people of Egypt picture strip from Tutankhamun and the discovery of his tomb. Let the children discuss the different classes of people at the ceremony and how they might participate in it. Show picture 1 of the same ceremony and discuss the headdresses the Pharaoh and his queen are wearing. What are they symbols of? Are these symbols present in the picture of the ceremony dedicating the monument?

Evaluation: Why would this ceremony be sacred? Why are the images of the gods carried from the temple? Why do trumpets and drums sound?
Have the children divide into small groups and role play a ceremony. They may role play a sacred Egyptian ceremony or a sacred American ceremony.

Extended Activities: Report on burial rites of the Egyptians. Do Americans have burial rites? Do Americans have special ways of preserving bodies?

Describe a sacred celebration which has not yet been discussed.

Do research and find out if other African countries have special ceremonies at harvest time. Which ones? Describe.

List what things and symbols Egyptians consider sacred. Draw one of the symbols. (lotus flower, ankh, falcon, eye of Horus, etc.)

Report on the type of government Egypt had. Why would the Pharaoh lead only the important ceremonies? Why was the ceremony sacred when the Pharaoh was there?

Construct a monument you would build for yourself. What would it look like and why?

In the movie "Ancient Egypt" you saw samples of the Egyptians dancing to their music. This was shown on the pictures in the tombs. Listen to Egyptian music from the sound tape to the slides of King Tut and make up your own dance. You may even make your own musical instruments.

Report on the Egyptian calendar.

Report on early Egyptian astrology.

Lesson 4: The Egyptians had sacred writings.

Initiatory Activities: Show the children pictures or copies of sacred writings they might be familiar with in their lives. (Bible, Koran, Torah, . . .) Ask them why are these sacred? Do they tell us how to live?

Developmental Activities: Explain that the Egyptians had sacred writings also. The Egyptian writings were called hieroglyphics which comes from the Greek word meaning sacred writings.

Show an Egyptian Hieroglyphic Alphabet from Guide to the Treasures of Tutankhamun. Discuss the meaning of the symbols.

Archeologists found many hieroglyphics on the walls of tombs of the Pharaohs. Inscription on coffin of King Tut was "O Mother Nut! Spread your winds about me like the imperishable stars." Why did the Egyptians write this?

The Ancient Egyptians believed in life after death. They wrote a sacred book called The Book of the Dead. They lived their lives according to this book and believed in the importance of truth and justice. They were buried in special ceremonies mentioned in this book. After they died, they believed they were judged on the deeds of their life.

Picture 9 from Treasures of Tutankhamun shows the judging scene. Let the children guess what the scene shows. Be sure they see the different sacred symbols. The heart is weighed against a feather, a sign of truth. If the man is judged worthy, he may enter a field in the NE of heaven called the "field of Food." Grain grows higher there than ever seen on the Nile. The field is surrounded by water and ferrymen must help him across. (There is no survival after death without a mummy.)

Evaluation: Ask the children how the Egyptians have to live their lives in order to find happiness in the afterlife? Why are they judged? Which god does the judging? (Osiris) Why is a mummy so important?

Write two hieroglyphics and explain what they stand for. You may also write your name in hieroglyphics by using the directions on the chart.

Extended Activities: Make a scroll and put on it important things you would like people to know about you or your class in three thousand years. Include papers and artifacts and bury them in a coffee can or other contained. What would future archeologists learn about the way we live?

Look at the slides of the King Tut exhibit. Why is this exhibit so special? How do you know that King Tut believed in immortality? What special things were buried with this boy king?

Make a secret code of your own. Be sure and write what letter each symbol stands for. See if anyone can figure out your code.

Make a mural that you would find on a tomb wall. Be sure and include some sacred symbols and sacred writings. You could do the judgment scene or some scene from Egyptian daily life.

Make a puppet show about something relating to Egypt. Let your imagination rule!

Study about Champollion and the Rosetta stone. Make a report to the class. Make a model of the stone. Why was it so important?

Culminating Activity: Make a Cairo Museum in the classroom. Have the children decide what should be in the museum. Models, projects, drawings, and reports can be selected.

Select a committee to nominate the curator of the museum. Select guides to show the parents and other visitors around the museum.

EVALUATION

The student would be evaluated by both objective and subjective means. The teacher would observe the student's participation in the class. The teacher would also evaluate any extended activities the student did and, combined with classroom activities, be able to discover the pupil's involvement with the material.

The student would be given a list of cognitive objectives for this unit. Together they would discuss if these objectives have been met. The teacher will also explain any grades given to the student's work in this unit. The teacher may also answer any questions the student may have.

The student would complete the evaluation of attitudes sheet and return them to the teacher. This will help the teacher in evaluating the unit.

Sample Questions for Evaluation of Attitudes

1. I would like to visit a pyramid.
2. I feel the Egyptians were smart people.
3. I would like to meet an Egyptian.
4. I would like to learn more about ancient Egypt.
5. I enjoyed doing my project on ancient Egypt.

6. My teacher listens to me.

7. I can understand what my teacher says.

8. I enjoy working in groups with my classmates.

9. I like myself.

10. I enjoy learning.

Put one of the following faces after each of the above statements.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Books for Teacher Reference

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Books for the Students

A Coloring Book of Ancient Egypt. San Francisco: Bellerophon, 1969.

Adler, Irving and Ruth. The Calendar. New York: John Day, 1967.

Cutright and others. Living in our Country and Other Lands. New York: Macmillan, 1966.

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Encyclopedia of World Mythology. New York: Galahad Books, 1975.

New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. New York: Hamlyn, 1968.

World Book Encyclopedia. Chicago: Field Enterprises, 1976.

Filmstrips

Africa, The Land of Developing Countries Series. The Nile Valley. SVE.

Concepts and Inquiry - Set 7. King Tut: Clues to a Mystery.

Democracy: Past and Present. Ancient Civilization.

Multi-Media Productions. Hatshepsut: The First Woman of History.

Movies

Ancient Egypt. Time-Life, 100 Eisenhower, Paramus, N.J. 07652

Ali and His Baby Camel. available from Dayton and Montgomery County Library.

Media Resources:

Ancient Egypt. Social Studies School Services, 10,000 Culver Blvd., Culver City, Ca. 90230.

Educational Media Resources on Egypt, 1977. available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20002.

Learning About Religions/Social Studies Program. Niles: Argus Communications, 1976.

Rosetta Stone Model. Social Studies School Service.

Museums

Dayton Art Institute

Field Museum of Chicago

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Museum of Natural History, Dayton, Ohio.

Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

Teaching Packet

A Guide to the Treasures of Tutankhamun. Exxon. Available free of charge at the museum currently showing the Tut exhibit. Excellent Resource.